

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08

INR-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 L-03 DODE-00 PA-01

USIA-06 SP-02 /068 W

-----113526 220728Z /15

R 211705Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 067

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 1308

USEC BRUSSELS

PARIS AND BRUSSELS ALSO FOR LABATT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, TS, PORG

ZSUBJ: APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS IN OATUU ATTITUDES ON TUNISIA

REF: (A) TUNIS 1039, (B) BRUSSELS 2159 (NOTAL), (C) ALGIERS 516

(NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. LEADERSHIP OF ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN TRADE UNION UNITY (OATUU) APPEARS TO HAVE STRONGLY DIFFERING VIEWS ON RECENT UGTT CLASH WITH GOVERNMENT AND ON LEGITIMACY OF CURRENT INTERIM UGTT LEADERSHIP. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING ABORTIVE UGTT GENERAL STRIKE ON JAN 26 AND SUBSEQUENT CIVIL DISORDER MOST INTERNATIONAL LABOR BODIES, IRRESPECTIVE OF POLITICAL PERSUASION, PROTESTED THE ARREST
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OF EX-SECRETARY GENERAL HABIB ACHOUR, DEMANDED HIS RELEASE AND CRITICIZED GOT ANTI-LABOR ACTIONS. ACCORDING TO REPORTS FROM MANY SOURCES, OATUU TOOK THIS SAME POSITION INITIALLY. RECENTLY, HOWEVER, SOME OATUU LEADERS SEEM TO HAVE CHANGED THEIR TUNE.

3. DENIS AKUMU AND HAJ ALI NEFICHI, RESPECTIVELY SEC GEN AND

PRESIDENT OF THE OATUU, HAVE BOTH VISITED TUNISIA IN PAST TWO WEEKS AND THEY HAVE BOTH GONE AWAY COMMENDING THE UGTT PROVISIONAL LEADERSHIP AND COMPLIMENTING APPARENT NORMALCY OF UGTT OPERATIONS. AKUMU AND NEFICHI VISITS DID NOT COINCIDE, SUPPOSEDLY BECAUSE OF "MIX UPLIN TRIP COORDINATION" AND ILLNESS OF ONE OF NEFICHI'S CHILDREN. THEIR PUBLIC STATEMENTS, AS REPORTED IN THE TUNISIAN PRESS, ARE SIMILAR, ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND FROM SEVERAL SOURCES THAT BOTH AKUMA AND NEFICHI CLAIMED PRIVATELY THEIR REMARKS WERE TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT. WE ARE NOT AWARE, HOWEVER, THAT EITHER HAS ISSUED ANY PUBLIC DENIALS OF STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO THEM WHILE IN TUNIS.

4. ABOVE VISITS WERE PRECEDED BY THAT OF MR. BOUZAR OF ALGERIA, ASST SECRETARY GENERAL OF OATUU, WHO WAS IN TUNIS FEB 2-3. ACCORDING TO VARIOUS ACCOUNTS, HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS DIFFER DIAMETRICALLY TO THOSE OF HIS FELLOW OATUU OFFICERS. FOLLOWING HIS VISIT, BOUZAR STRONGLY CRITICIZED GOT POLICIES AND PRESENT UGTT LEADERSHIP AND HE STRONGLY DEFENDED HABIB ACHOUR AND OTHER OUSTED LEADERS. AS REPORTED IN REFTTEL C, HE SUBSEQUENTLY CRITICIZED POSITIONS TAKEN BY AKUMA AND NEFICHI.

5. SITUATION HAS BEEN FURTHER CLOUDED BY PRESENCE OF BONIFACE KABORE OF UPPER VOLTA IN ICFTU DELEGATION CURRENTLY VISITING TUNIS (SEPTTEL TO FOLLOW). AS REPORTED PREVIOUSLY BY AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS, ICFTU HAS BEEN CONSISTENT SUPPORTER OF ACHOUR AND CONFIDENTIAL

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HAS BEEN OPENLY CRITICAL OF NEW UGTT LEADERSHIP.

6. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY COMMENTS ADDRESSEES MIGHT HAVE ON DEGREE TO WHICH OATUU LEADERSHIP IS SPLIT ON UGTT QUESTION, AS MEDIA REPORTS AND VARIOUS PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF OATUU OFFICERS SEEM TO INDICATE. UGTT HAS TOLD US THAT OATUU WILL SEND OBSERVER DELEGATION TO PARTICIPATE IN EXTRAORDINARY UGTT CONGRESS SCHEDULED FOR FEB 25-26. WE WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING WHETHER THIS CAN BE CONFIRMED. AS OF LAST WEEK, NO OTHER FOREIGN OR INTERNATIONAL LABOR GROUPS HAD ACCEPTED INVITATIONS. MULCAHY

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Draft Date: 21 feb 1978
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Drafter: n/a
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